

## Social Security Administration

## § 416.903

or the person who is receiving benefits based on disability or blindness.

[56 FR 36962, Aug. 1, 1991, as amended at 58 FR 47577, Sept. 9, 1993; 62 FR 6420, Feb. 11, 1997; 62 FR 13733, Mar. 21, 1997; 65 FR 11878, Mar. 7, 2000]

EFFECTIVE DATE NOTE: At 65 FR 11878, Mar. 7, 2000, § 416.902 was amended by removing the terms "Secretary", "Source of record", and "You", revising the definitions of "Medical sources" and "Treating source", and adding definitions in the appropriate alphabetical order for the terms "Acceptable medical source", "Nonexamining source", "Non-treating source", and "You or your", effective Apr. 6, 2000. For the convenience of the user, the superseded text is set forth as follows:

### § 416.902 General definitions and terms for this subpart.

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*Medical sources* refers to treating sources, sources of record, and consultative examiners for us. See § 416.913.

*Secretary* means the Secretary of Health and Human Services.

*Source of record* means a hospital, clinic or other source that has provided you with medical treatment or evaluation, as well as a physician or psychologist who has treated or evaluated you but does not have or did not have an ongoing treatment relationship with you.

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*Treating source* means your own physician or psychologist who has provided you with medical treatment or evaluation and who has or has had an ongoing treatment relationship with you. Generally, we will consider that you have an ongoing treatment relationship with a physician or psychologist when the medical evidence establishes that you see or have seen the physician or psychologist with a frequency consistent with accepted medical practice for the type of treatment and evaluation required for your medical condition(s). We may consider a physician or psychologist who has treated you only a few times or only after long intervals (e.g., twice a year) to be your treating source if the nature and frequency of the treatment is typical for your condition(s). We will not consider a physician or psychologist to be your treating physician if your relationship with the physician or psychologist is not based on your need for treatment, but solely on your need to obtain a report in support of your claim for benefits. In such a case, we will consider the physician or psy-

chologist to be a consulting physician or psychologist.

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*You* refers to the person who has applied for or is receiving benefits based on disability or blindness.

### DETERMINATIONS

### § 416.903 Who makes disability and blindness determinations.

(a) *State agencies.* State agencies make disability and blindness determinations for the Commissioner for most persons living in the State. State agencies make these disability and blindness determinations under regulations containing performance standards and other administrative requirements relating to the disability and blindness determination function. States have the option of turning the function over to the Federal Government if they no longer want to make disability determinations. Also, the Commissioner may take the function away from any State which has substantially failed to make disability and blindness determinations in accordance with these regulations. Subpart J of this part contains the rules the States must follow in making disability and blindness determinations.

(b) *Social Security Administration.* The Social Security Administration will make disability and blindness determinations for—

(1) Any person living in a State which is not making for the Commissioner any disability and blindness determinations or which is not making those determinations for the class of claimants to which that person belongs; and

(2) Any person living outside the United States.

(c) *What determinations are authorized.* The Commissioner has authorized the State agencies and the Social Security Administration to make determinations about—

(1) Whether you are disabled or blind;

(2) The date your disability or blindness began; and

(3) The date your disability or blindness stopped.

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(d) *Review of State agency determinations.* On review of a State agency determination or redetermination of disability or blindness we may find that—

(1) You are, or are not, disabled or blind, regardless of what the State agency found;

(2) Your disability or blindness began earlier or later than the date found by the State agency; and

(3) Your disability or blindness stopped earlier or later than the date found by the State agency.

(e) *Initial determinations for mental impairments.* An initial determination by a State agency or the Social Security Administration that you are not disabled (or a Social Security Administration review of a State agency's initial determination), in any case where there is evidence which indicates the existence of a mental impairment, will be made only after every reasonable effort has been made to ensure that a qualified psychiatrist or psychologist has completed the medical portion of the case review and any applicable residual functional capacity assessment. (See § 416.1016 for the qualifications we consider necessary for a psychologist to be a psychological consultant and § 416.1017 for what we consider *reasonable effort*.) If the services of qualified psychiatrists or psychologists cannot be obtained because of impediments at the State level, the Commissioner may contract directly for the services. In a case where there is evidence of mental and nonmental impairments and a qualified psychologist serves as a psychological consultant, the psychologist will evaluate only the mental impairment, and a physician will evaluate the nonmental impairment. The overall determination of impairment severity in combined mental and nonmental impairment cases will be made by a medical consultant other than a qualified psychologist unless the mental impairment alone would justify a finding of disability.

(f) *Determinations for childhood impairments.* In making a determination under title XVI with respect to the disability of a child to whom paragraph (e) of this section does not apply, we will make reasonable efforts to ensure that a qualified pediatrician or other individual who specializes in a field of

medicine appropriate to the child's impairment(s) evaluates the case of the child.

[46 FR 29211, May 29, 1981, as amended at 52 FR 33927, Sept. 9, 1987; 58 FR 47577, Sept. 9, 1993; 62 FR 38454, July 18, 1997]

#### § 416.903a Program integrity.

We will not use in our program any individual or entity, except to provide existing medical evidence, who is currently excluded, suspended, or otherwise barred from participation in the Medicare or Medicaid programs, or any other Federal or Federally-assisted program; whose license to provide health care services is currently revoked or suspended by any State licensing authority pursuant to adequate due process procedures for reasons bearing on professional competence, professional conduct, or financial integrity; or who until a final determination is made has surrendered such a license while formal disciplinary proceedings involving professional conduct are pending. By individual or entity we mean a medical or psychological consultant, consultative examination provider, or diagnostic test facility. Also see §§ 416.919 and 416.919g(b).

[56 FR 36963, Aug. 1, 1991]

#### § 416.904 Determinations by other organizations and agencies.

A decision by any nongovernmental agency or any other governmental agency about whether you are disabled or blind is based on its rules and is not our decision about whether you are disabled or blind. We must make a disability or blindness determination based on social security law. Therefore, a determination made by another agency that you are disabled or blind is not binding on us.

#### DEFINITION OF DISABILITY

#### § 416.905 Basic definition of disability for adults.

(a) The law defines disability as the inability to do any substantial gainful activity by reason of any medically determinable physical or mental impairment which can be expected to result in death or which has lasted or can be expected to last for a continuous period